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DECEMBER 17, 2004

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POWELL SAYS UNITED NATIONS ON TRACK WITH IRAQI ELECTIONS

Annan, Powell discuss Iraq, Haiti, Darfur

Washington -- Secretary of State Colin Powell says U.N. efforts to support Iraqi elections in January 2005 are on track, but Iraq has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the elections.

"The secretary-general [Kofi Annan] has increased the number of U.N. personnel in the region and, as you heard [December 15], he has announced they'll be opening offices in due course in Basra and Irbil," Powell said after a meeting December 16 with Annan in Washington.

"And, he advised me that some 6,000 Iraqi personnel have been trained in the conduct of the election and over 130,000 have been identified to actually run the various polling stations."

Under the plan adopted by the Iraqi Independent Electoral Commission, the National Assembly chosen January 30, 2005, in nationwide elections would then select a new government and draft a constitution.

Annan said that beyond the immediate elections, the United Nations is prepared to work with the new Iraqi government on development of its constitution and the next set of national elections.

However, Annan said that even though the United Nations is on track with the technical preparations for the

January 2005 elections, there are security issues that the Iraqi government will have to address.

“Obviously, there are other aspects of the elections which the Iraqi government will have to take care of, particularly the context in which the elections are held, [the] security-political environment, and the efforts which we are helping them [with] to try and pull into the process those who are outside the process to make it as inclusive as possible,” Annan said. “The more inclusive the process, the likelier that the results will not be contested,”

Annan said he also discussed U.N. support in Afghanistan where the United Nations ran the elections, “which were very successful.” Although that was an election for the president only, he said, the United Nations is beginning to look ahead to spring 2005 for the parliamentary and municipal elections there.

On the Iraqi Oil-for-Food Program fraud investigation, Annan said he is concerned about getting to the bottom of the allegations as quickly as possible so that the United Nations can focus on its essential work.

Powell said he and Annan also discussed issues involving Haiti and the Darfur region in Sudan.

Annan praised the work Powell has done as secretary of state, saying this meeting gave him “a chance to thank Secretary Powell for the excellent cooperation and the wonderful work he has done around the world. We at the U.N. are going to miss him. We did work extremely well together,” Annan said.

A State Department transcript of the Powell-Annan remarks may be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/39873.htm>

POWELL TRIP TESTIFIES TO IMPORTANCE OF U.S.-EUROPEAN RELATIONS

State’s Ereli recaps trip to Bulgaria, Belgium, Netherlands, Morocco

By Jeffrey Thomas

Washington File Staff Writer

The recent trip to Europe by Secretary of State Colin Powell was an opportunity to show the importance the United States places on strengthening Euro-Atlantic relations, State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli said at a briefing for foreign journalists in Washington December 15.

Ereli, recapping the highlights of the December 6-11 trip to Bulgaria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Morocco, described the accomplishments from the U.S. point of view as well as seeking to counter those who, he said, have mischaracterized the transatlantic relationship.

Taking issue with commentary that has portrayed the United States as unilateralist, Ereli said Powell’s frequent visits to Europe and the fact that the United States has devoted so much attention and political capital to European or Euro-Atlantic institutions testify to the value the United States place on those institutions.

“The United States recognizes that it cannot achieve its interests and its goals in foreign policy without a strong and cooperative relationship with Europe,” Ereli said. “And that was the spirit that infused [Powell’s] meetings in Bulgaria and Brussels and the Netherlands.”

During the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Ministerial Council in Sofia, Bulgaria, Powell reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to that institution, Ereli said.

“One need only look so far as Ukraine to see the continued relevance and utility of organizations like the OSCE,” Ereli said. The OSCE sponsored international observer missions for the presidential election and runoff elections there, and will be sending an observer mission to the repeat runoff election December 26.

“I would take very, very strong issue with critics or observers who suggest that the OSCE is either an obsolete or increasingly irrelevant organization,” he added.

Among the agreements reached during the Sofia ministerial were important initiatives on terrorism, trafficking in persons, and racism and discrimination, Ereli noted.

At the North Atlantic Council meeting in Brussels, Belgium, Powell underscored how NATO has transformed itself from a Cold War alliance to one better suited for today's multipolar world -- one able to deal with new threats anywhere in the world, Ereli said.

He added that the United States welcomed NATO support for democracy and stability in Afghanistan and the Balkans, as well as its willingness to help train Iraqi security forces.

In The Hague, the Netherlands, Powell again sought to underscore at the U.S.-EU meetings the value the United States places on its relationship with Europe and the European Union, Ereli said. The items on the agenda -- Iraq, Palestinian elections, Iran -- reflected the U.S. recognition that its partnership with Europe is critical to American economic, security and political interests around the world, he said.

Ereli also discussed Powell's attendance at the Forum for the Future in Rabat, Morocco, which brought together government, civic and business leaders from across the broader Middle East and North Africa -- along with Western countries -- to discuss initiatives aimed at broadening economic and political participation within the countries of the region.

"It grouped the countries of the Middle East with the countries of G8 [Group of Eight industrialized countries], the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), in a detailed discussion of ways in which we could all work together to advance political participation, civic empowerment, education and economic opportunity," said Ereli.

"This isn't about the United States or the G8 or the EU coming up with some ideas and ramming them down the [Middle East] region's throat. Rather, it's a question of the leaders and the people of the region saying, this is what we want for ourselves, and we are going to work in partnership with others to try to achieve maximum benefit for everybody," he said.

Ereli rejected as "wrong" and "misleading" and "unfair" reporting on the event suggesting that the political content of the forum was "toned down" or that the focus was on economics rather than politics. He termed "false"

the distinction between politics and economics "because they go hand in hand."

"You can't have an economically empowered populace without giving them some measure of freedom," he said.

The United States believes each country will democratize in its own way and bases its bilateral relationship on the conditions, circumstances and history of each particular country. Democracy is "not something that we are going to impose," Ereli said.

The full transcript of the Foreign Press Center briefing is available at
<http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/39822.htm>

FORUM FOR THE FUTURE GOALS FIND STRONG SUPPORT IN BROADER MIDEAST

Inaugural meeting in Morocco produced broad dialogue, concrete initiatives

The principles and goals of the Forum for the Future have taken root in the countries of the broader Middle East and North Africa, according to State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli, and the countries of the region are moving ahead with specific initiatives to improve educational, economic and political opportunities.

"I think you should take a careful look at what happened in Rabat," Ereli told reporters at a December 15 briefing. "That -- more than any words that we can say as the United States -- affirms that this idea has gotten traction, this idea is something that is responsive to what people in the region are looking for, and they have taken the ball and are running with it at full speed towards a brighter future."

Rabat, Morocco, was the site of the inaugural meeting of the Forum for the Future December 10 and 11. The forum brought together government, civic and business leaders from across the broader Middle East and North Africa and from the Group of Eight (G8) industrial nations to discuss initiatives aimed at broadening economic and political participation within the countries of the region.

Ereli said that leaders from civic organizations representing everything from women's rights and economic rights to freedom of the press and freedom of expression had the opportunity to sit with their political leaders and say, "these regulations, these practices, these laws are holding us back or are restricting the creativity and productivity and involvement of the citizens in the affairs of their country; and it's not just bad for us, it's bad for you, too."

He said this type of direct dialogue between the governments and the people of the region has not happened before and needs to occur more often. "We're hoping that it opens the door to a sustained interaction where government is responsive to the needs of the people," he said.

Ereli noted that representatives of the countries in the region proposed several initiatives at the meeting. These included literacy training programs, election support initiatives, entrepreneurship training facilities and small business funding networks.

He said that political and economic development are complementary and must go hand in hand.

"You can't have an economically empowered populace without giving them some measure of freedom. A measure of freedom will do no good if they don't have any way to act on and profit from their creative impulses," he said.

He said that the Forum for the Future addresses the fundamental aspects of social development which, when neglected, have been a source of frustration in the region.

Ereli said that the forum, for the first time, brought the leaders and people of the region together to say "this is what we want for ourselves, and we are going to work in partnership with others to try to achieve maximum benefit for everybody."

INTERNATIONAL FORUM TACKLES CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSION PROBLEM

Collaborative effort seeks to capture and store CO₂ from power plants

By Cheryl Pellerin
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States is leading an international effort to make the capture and underground storage of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions commercially competitive and safe, seeking to control greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels and ultimately slow global warming.

The voluntary initiative seeks to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants and improve the technology that makes carbon dioxide capture and storage possible.

The Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum (CSLF) is a 10-year collaboration among the United States, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, the European Commission, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Norway, the Russian Federation, South Africa and the United Kingdom to develop improved cost-effective technologies for CO₂ capture and long-term storage. The first ministerial meeting was held in June 2003 near Washington.

CSLF members work to improve, develop and disseminate carbon sequestration technologies through data gathering, information exchange and joint projects. The CSLF has recognized 10 carbon dioxide sequestration projects worldwide that demonstrate a wide range of CO₂ capture, transport and storage research and activities.

CSLF members meet often, says Justin R. "Judd" Swift, deputy assistant secretary for international affairs for fossil energy at the Department of Energy (DOE). A ministerial meeting is held every 18 months and technical meetings are held twice a year. Engineers and scientists from CSLF countries also visit international projects to participate in and learn about different technologies.

"On September 14 this year, the CSLF ministers met in Melbourne, Australia, and issued a communique reaffirming their commitment to the CSLF as a framework for international cooperation in research and development for the capture, transport and storage of carbon dioxide," Swift adds.

At the meeting, two new members -- France and Germany -- joined the CSLF, 10 carbon sequestration projects were approved and a technology road map was agreed upon.

The road map, says Robert Kane, senior technical adviser for carbon management in DOE's Office of Fossil Energy, "is a document that discusses the state of the science of carbon sequestration and the gaps in understanding the technologies."

One gap is determining how much geological storage potential exists worldwide. "That's a big issue," he says. "A task force was formed at the last meeting and an international group of experts is working to assess that question."

Many such technical questions remain, primarily involving carbon dioxide storage. CO2 sequestration is really two technologies -- carbon dioxide capture and carbon dioxide storage. In CO2 capture, carbon dioxide can be collected from gaseous emissions that arise from fossil-fueled power plants, refineries, fertilizer production plants and other industrial facilities.

In CO2 storage, captured gases can be, among other methods, injected into geologic formations like sandstone or limestone saline aquifers, old oil and gas fields, and unminable coal beds. CO2 will remain underground for geologic timescales -- centuries or longer -- but geologists are still investigating what happens to the gas once it is underground.

"With storage, it's all about uncertainty," says S. Julio Friedmann, who heads the Carbon Storage Initiative at the DOE Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California. "The science of storage deals with the uncertainties and reducing the uncertainties, whereas the science of capture is all about economics and cost reduction."

At this point, he adds, the state of geological assessment is sufficiently advanced to ensure that CO2 storage can be done in many places safely. Lots of capacity exists, but just how much is still to be determined. And there are other challenges.

"An ongoing issue for all CSLF countries," Swift says, "is to bring awareness to the world about the potential for carbon sequestration. A third of CO2 emissions are from power plants around the world, so if all power

plants captured and stored carbon dioxide, that would reduce CO2 emissions by a third."

According to Robert Kane, "There has been a tremendous increase in interest and support for this program over the last few years both domestically and internationally at the highest levels of government and industry."

An important aspect of the program, he adds, is that a range of field experiments around the world is showing that carbon sequestration is a credible, tangible activity.

"It's not just a laboratory approach to carbon mitigation," Kane says. "It's a real live approach for projects located throughout the world that are being tested and operated, and it's a viable solution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, if indeed that needs to be done."

The CSLF is also helping developing countries build the capacity to sequester carbon dioxide in their regions.

"Many nations around the world -- like Brazil, Indonesia, Venezuela or Mexico -- have large CO2 emissions but don't currently have the knowledge base or industrial base to pursue carbon capture and storage themselves," Julio Friedmann says.

"The CSLF asked those countries to join because they see the CSLF as an avenue for technology transfer," he adds. "Many countries involved in CSLF may not be able to begin projects themselves, so the CSLF gives them a way to participate in the hope that, as their economies grow, they will choose to employ this technology in a way that makes sense for their own countries."

The CSLF has an enormous mandate, Friedmann says, "and one that the global community has really embraced."

This is the final article in a four-part series about the international U.S. Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum.

Part 3 is available at
<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=December&x=20041215121236lcniirellep0.762727&t=gi/gi-latest.html>

Part 2 is available at
<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2004/Dec/15-595073.html>

Part 1 is available at
[http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.
html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=December&x=
20041213122136lcniirellep0.6637842&t=gi/gi-latest.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=December&x=20041213122136lcniirellep0.6637842&t=gi/gi-latest.html)

Information about the CSLF is available at
<http://www.cslforum.org/>